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September 21, 1996

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 9th Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, California, 95814

Subject: Water Use Efficiency Work Group--Definition

Dear Lester:

Here are some additional thoughts on the concerns that I raised at the September 20 BDAC meeting regarding the subjects being considered under purview of the Work Group.

I hope it is clear that I am not taking issue with the scope of subjects being treated under this Work Group. However, I find the organization of the material confusing and misleading after coming to understand that the intention of the effort is to deal not only with urban and agricultural water use efficiency (water conservation), but also with water markets, water transfers, conjunctive use and recycling, including all of the assurances, protection and incentives to make those processes work.

I was suggesting in my letter of August 30th that there should be a separation between urban and agricultural water use efficiency issues and the other, broader issues which I believe should be classified under a category of statewide water management. After listening to the discussion on September 20th, it appears that the statement of the Work Group's assignment is inadequate to express this broader water management function. The work group seems to be named after the tail, not after the dog.

It appears to me that the intent of this function in the overall study is to deal with strategies for management, and reallocation of water supplies to meet competing demands from urban, agricultural and environmental water needs in the face of limited supplies. The planning process is not being driven by efficiency, but by other social goals.

I object to the use of the word "efficiency" as an overall term to cover this whole field of water management. Efficiency is a term used in scientific and economic fields to express a relationship of original inputs to a derived function or its benefits. It is expressed as a ratio of some physical or monetary measurement. This might be fine here if there were the capability to evaluate the place of water in all three sectors--urban, agriculture and environmental--in terms of physical and economic measurements.

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We can probably all agree that it is not feasible to measure the benefits (positive or negative) of allocating or reallocating available and developed water supplies from agricultural uses to urban and environmental purposes. Nevertheless, as I understand your statement at Friday's meeting, water conservation, water transfers, and conjunctive use are considered part of improved statewide water use efficiency. I'm not disagreeing with the intent to reallocate water or that water conservation should be part of the plan. But I do disagree that the overall strategy should be called "efficiency". Some reasons: we cannot measure the social and environmental aspects of the strategy on the same basis as for urban and agricultural water use which have definite, measurable economic impacts; planning is not being done to accomplish goals with the least water or costs; and the term is not generally descriptive of the overall strategy.

I think that the mission and purpose of this overall subject, which I am calling statewide water management, should be reanalyzed to decide what strategies it should spell out in the CALFED process. Is water marketing only going to show up as a subheading under agricultural water use efficiency?

I proposed at the September 20th meeting that many of the "tools" included in the table attached to the water use efficiency status report should be moved out of the agricultural sector column into a new statewide water management category. I still think so.

Where is it spelled out how a "tool" is tied to agricultural water management objectives or to statewide water management objectives? There seems to be no preceding presentation of the problems, the needs, or the conditions that a tool is proposed to fix in the agricultural efficient water use strategy paper. The tools need a format that develops them as important subjects, not as subordinate to agricultural or urban water efficiency.

I plan to attend the meeting of the Work Group on September 26 and will be happy to continue to explore this subject with you.

Sincerely,


Stu Pyle